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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS







South Baptist Church, 1899.

**HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**SOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**OF BOSTON**

**WITH NOTES RELATING TO THE**  
**FOURTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**

**COMPILED BY**  
**FRANCIS E. BLAKE**

**BOSTON, MASS.**  
**1899**





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#### PREFATORY NOTE.

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The compiler of this brief sketch has thought it desirable to place it in the hands of the members of this church at this important period of its history.

He has taken pleasure in preparing it because of his membership in the church and active participation in its work and acquaintance with its history almost from his childhood. He trusts it will prove acceptable, and will quicken the interest of all the members in the welfare of this church, which our Lord has so blessed in years that are past.

BOSTON, October, 1899.



## THE SOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH.

At the time of the annexation of Dorchester Neck (now South Boston) to Boston in 1804, the population was only about sixty; and, notwithstanding the efforts of the large landholders and projectors of the annexation scheme, the growth in number of residents was for many years very slow. One bridge only (the present Dover Street) at that period afforded communication with the city proper, and it was not until the year 1828 that the second bridge (now Federal Street) was built. This somewhat stimulated the increase of the population, which in 1828 numbered about 3,000. There was not then, however, nor for years after, any public conveyance between the city proper and South Boston.

The comparative isolation of the residents here rendered the establishment of schools and churches the more important, and as early as 1810 religious services were instituted. What is now the Unitarian Church was first founded, to be followed within a few years by an Episcopal (1816), Roman Catholic (1819), Congregationalist (1823), and an unsuccessful attempt of the Methodists.

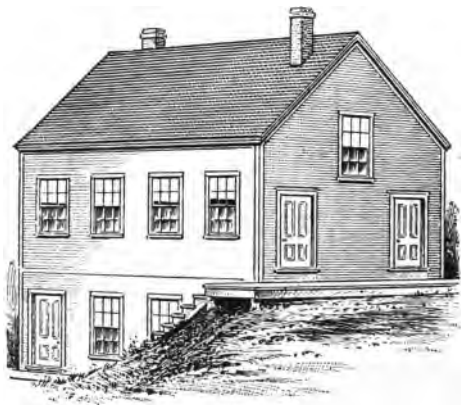
The establishment of a Baptist church in South Boston was primarily due to Mr. Jacob Flinn, because of his interest in the progress of religious work in

general and his desire to promote the Baptist belief. He had removed to South Boston as early as 1825, and very soon after his settlement established a prayer-meeting, which was held in his own house. With his excellent wife as a helper and the assistance of a few others whose interests were identified with the Baptist denomination, this meeting was maintained for more than a year, and resulted in establishing the faith of many and in the conversion of souls.

The work in the several other churches in the place was at a low ebb; and, although the discouragements which Mr. Flinn and his associates encountered were great, progress was made, so that in the spring of 1827 a Sabbath school was established and a weekly lecture arranged for by Rev. George Evans, a city missionary. This lecture by the courtesy of the Congregationalists was held in their house of worship at the corner of Broadway and A Street, and was well attended. The success of the movement and the interest manifested in the Sabbath school was such as to indicate clearly that a permanent place of worship must be secured.

On the south-west corner of Broadway and C Street there was a building which had been erected by the Methodist Religious Society for a house of worship, but was now unoccupied. With a clear vision of the necessities for immediate action Mr. Samuel Hill decided to purchase this building for the Baptists, with whom he was closely identified in all their interests. Although without money, he bought the lot of land and building in his own name, pledging to pay

\$600 for it above the mortgage, a sum much larger than the amount of all his possessions. His faith in the development of evangelical work, and the successful establishment of a church maintaining Baptist doctrines was profound; and with abounding trust in God he assumed the burden of the purchase, and offered



The First Meeting-house.  
South-west Corner Broadway and C Street.

the house to the Baptists, which was gratefully accepted.

The house was opened for public worship July 5, 1827; but it is quite possible that the Sabbath school had gathered there a few months previously. The view of the building which here appears gives a good idea of the *first* meeting-house of the South Baptist Church. There is evidence that a portion of the basement was available for some of the gatherings,

but it did not prove satisfactory; for in January, 1829, it was voted "to finish the cellar under the Meeting House for Lecture and Sabbath School room." At that time eleven persons pledged for the work \$47 in cash or materials. This improvement furnished a convenient place for the Sabbath school and evening meetings during the week. There were two doors on Broadway affording entrance to the main room, while the basement was entered by descending a few steps from C Street. There was a gallery on the east side. The house was furnished very plainly, but afforded a comfortable, if not a commodious place for worship. It is still standing in its original location, although one story has been added to it.

Not long after entering this house the subject of the formation of a church was seriously considered. A number of those in sympathy with the movement were members of the Federal Street Baptist Church, worshipping in a building on Federal Street near Milk Street. This connection led to a request by some twenty-five individuals to be constituted a *branch* of that church; and on the 31st of July, 1828, the matter was practically consummated by the passage of votes relating to the establishment and regulation of affairs of the branch. One of these regulations provided that a committee of the parent church should attend all the business meetings of the branch, and their sanction was necessary to legalize the votes.

On the 28th of August following, the Federal Street Church held a meeting in the "Lecture-room of the meeting-house" in South Boston; and nineteen

persons having been accepted and the articles of agreement approved, these persons were duly formed into the "South Boston Branch of the Federal Street Church of Christ in the City of Boston," and as such was recognized by appropriate services before a large



The Second Meeting-house.  
North-west Corner Broadway and C Street.

and attentive audience, Rev. Howard Malcom preaching the sermon from Heb. x. 23-25.

Evidences of growth became immediately apparent; and, before many months had been passed in this house, the need of a new meeting-house to accommodate the increasing congregation and Sabbath school was seriously considered. In June, 1829, it was voted to



purchase the meeting-house of the First Baptist Church located on Hanover Street (they being about to build a new house). The frame was floated instead of being carted over to South Boston, and duly set up on the north-west corner of Broadway and C Street, directly opposite the building then occupied by the church.

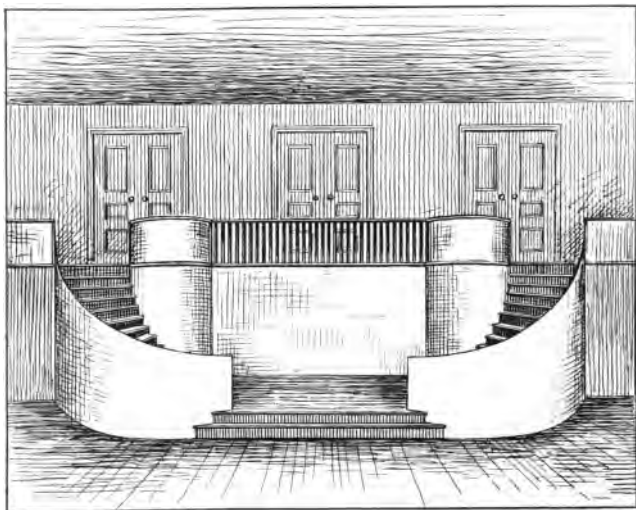
This lot of land, measuring 96 feet on Broadway by  $145\frac{1}{2}$  feet on C Street, cost nearly \$2,800, or twenty cents per square foot; but the purchasers were able to pay only one-half of this sum, the balance being secured by mortgage. At this time Deacon Hill appeared again as one ready to help, offering to loan the sum of \$1,000 if the others of the committee would together loan an equal amount. It was found difficult to secure subscriptions of sufficient amount to pay all the cost of building, and this resulted in leaving the church to commence its work in a new location with a mortgage of several thousand dollars.

The vestry was ready for occupancy in December, but the audience-room was not completed until July following. It was publicly dedicated July 22, 1830.

The exterior of the house compared favorably with other church buildings of the day, but architecturally could not be considered attractive. The view presented here shows it in its original condition and as it remained until 1858, when the steps in front were removed. The area of the building was 72 x 57 feet. The main stairways were constructed in nearly a complete circle up to a narrow landing, from which entrance was had to the main house, the landing

affording an excellent place to stand and look down upon the incoming worshippers.

There were 104 pews, of which 32 were in the gallery, the original valuation of the whole number being fixed at \$12,320, which sum probably repre-



Front Stairway and Entrance, Second Meeting-house.

sented more than the actual cost of the house. The pews were very long, many of them seating seven to ten persons; and the house would accommodate seven hundred to eight hundred. Although commodious, it was very plainly furnished, or would now be so considered. It was heated by stoves and lighted by

whale-oil lamps. No carpet for the aisles was provided until 1833, and the first reference to a baptistry is in 1835. For some reason, however, it was the custom as late as 1842 to administer the ordinance of baptism at the seaside, generally at the foot of C Street. The pulpit was very large, and, as was customary then, was considerably elevated from the floor. A viol, double-bass, and a clarionet (a flute formerly used having been dispensed with) aided in the service of song for several years; but these were subsequently supplanted by a small organ. In 1847 a new organ was purchased, and remained in use until 1866.

The entrance to the vestry was from a passage-way on the westerly side; and the writer can now almost feel the darkness of this entry and smell the odor of the single whale-oil lamp. The vestry was furnished with benches, which were not as comfortable as the settees of the present day, although more substantially built.

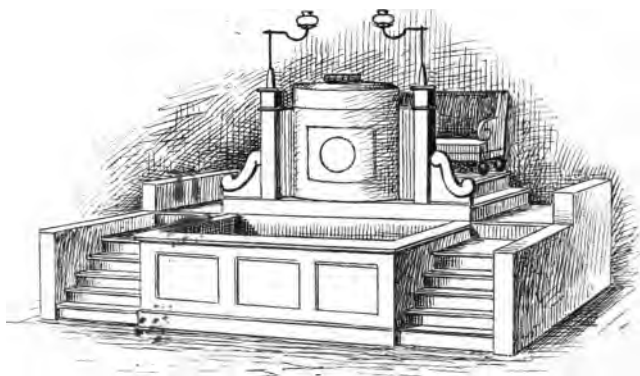


The desk, or pulpit, used by Dr. Stillman in the First Church, was brought over here and used in the vestry. It was unique and ornamental, and its destruction in 1858 has often been lamented.

The area of the basement was considered too large for the ordinary purposes of the church, and a portion of it was fitted up and rented for stores with entrances on C Street. Some years after, two small stores were added in front, one in each corner of the building. The income from these stores was a substantial finan-

cial benefit to the society, as was also a house erected on the westerly side of the lot, and occupied by the sexton.

As the church increased its activities, the room occupied by stores was needed for its work; and one by one they were given up, the front stores being the last to be abandoned, at the time extensive alterations were made in 1858.



Pulpit, Second Meeting-house.

The spiritual work of the church was not neglected during these early days, but it required strong faith and earnest devotion to maintain the new interest. In September, 1828, we find record of the appointment of a day for fasting and prayer to seek the divine blessing upon their plan, and there are very early evidences of interest in various lines of religious and benevolent work, tract distribution, temperance, education, etc.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was regularly observed ; and in December, 1828, there were purchased one flagon, two plates, and four cups for use on such occasions. Monday evening was devoted to a weekly conference meeting and Thursday evening to the "weekly lecture." "Covenant meetings" were held from about the first establishment of the church down to within a comparatively few years.

While the relations of the church with the Federal Street Society had always been pleasant, it seemed desirable to the branch, after building the new meeting-house, that the provisional relations with the parent church should be severed ; and the proposition meeting the approbation of the parent church, after preliminary action, on the 4th of March, 1831, it was constituted and recognized as an *independent* body with fifty-two members, to be henceforth known as the *South Baptist Church* in the City of Boston, the Rev. Howard Malcom preaching the sermon, Rev. Daniel Sharp, D.D., and Rev. James M. Knowles participating in the service.

During the earliest days of its history the church was dependent for preaching upon the services of various ministers and laymen, some of whom were connected with the Society for the Promotion of Morality and Piety, and subsequently the Boston Baptist Evangelical Society.

Of course, much of this service was gratuitously rendered. Of these helpers, Rev. OTIS WING labored here the longest period of any, from April to Dec. 30, 1828, baptizing at least five of the original members. He was a young man, lately ordained and

in full vigor of life; and his eight months' service was of great value to the feeble church. After leaving South Boston, he preached in various places both in New England and the West, organizing a large number of churches. His last pastorate was in Newton Junction, N.H., where he died May 1, 1897, in the ninety-ninth year of his age.

On the 6th of January, 1829, only a week after Mr. Wing closed his labors with it, the church voted "that the committee carry the expression of the branch to the parent church in favor of Mr. Driver tarrying with us." This desire met the approval of the Federal Street Church, and on the 16th of April following Mr. THOMAS DRIVER was ordained. His pastorate continued only one year; but his ministrations were acceptable, with favorable results to the church, twelve persons receiving baptism within a few months. During his stay the new house was commenced and the vestry occupied.

Rev. ROLLIN H. NEALE was selected by the church as its pastor in October, 1830, after the new house of worship had been completed. At this time Mr. Neale was a student at Newton Theological Institution; but during his course of study he preached in South Boston, and attended in a measure to the duties of pastor, coming in from Newton on Friday or Saturday, sometimes by carriage, but often on foot, and returning Monday. A few months after he commenced his labors, the branch became an independent church, as before stated. Upon completion of his course of study he was ordained, Sept. 15, 1833, and installed as

pastor with a salary of \$800 a year. The church was united, and looked forward to days of prosperity; but, to the great disappointment of all, in the midst of especial religious interest, Mr. Neale terminated his service March 19, 1834, accepting a call to another church. This unexpected move after the church had waited three years for him to complete his studies was a blow from which it was long in recovering. During his stay seventy-three were added by baptism and letter.

Mr. Neale subsequently became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Boston, remaining as such forty years, until his death in 1879, at the age of seventy-one years.

Rev. TIMOTHY R. CRESSEY was settled as pastor May 25, 1834, at which time he was thirty-four years of age. He had been previously settled at Hingham. At the time of the commencement of his work here the church was suffering from the effects of Mr. Neale's abrupt departure and apparently not ready for the new minister. Mr. Cressey was a "stirring, active, cheerful" Christian minister; but circumstances were not favorable for his continuance in the pastorate, and he resigned on the 22d of June, 1835. His subsequent labors in other fields, especially in the West, were arduous and faithful. He died in Des Moines, Ia., Aug. 31, 1870, aged seventy, leaving several sons in the ministry.

For many months after this the church had no settled pastor, but its meetings and its general activities were continued. Rev. J. G. Nailor and others supplied the pulpit, the former for about nine months.

Then followed a long period of depression, lasting until the year 1838. The close of this period, as one historian says, "was rendered dark by the coming of one who ministered at first with great acceptance, but soon introduced discord and confusion, which for the time resulted in dividing, scattering, and discouraging the church."

The future of the church was imperilled ; but good judgment finally prevailed, most of those who had deserted the church gradually returned, and brighter days followed. The hearts of the people turned to their first pastor as one fitted to lead them in the emergency ; and on the 1st of October, 1838, the church extended a unanimous call to Rev. THOMAS DRIVER, who was then at Dedham, to again become their pastor. This he accepted Dec. 1, 1838, and remained until the 12th of April, 1843. During this period there was great prosperity, and more than two hundred and fifty were added to the church, one hundred and fifty-six of these in one year. A portion of the debt was cancelled, and the house repaired. Mr. Driver was an eccentric man, but exceedingly energetic and earnest in his work and a "pungent preacher of the gospel." During the great revival of 1842 which swept through the city Mr. Driver enlisted soul and body in the work, thundering forth his messages with no uncertain sound. He made many friends. After a useful life he passed to his reward at Lynn in 1873, aged seventy-three.

Rev. DUNCAN DUNBAR, pastor of the McDougal Street Baptist Church, New York, was next called, in



November, 1843, commencing his labors the first Sunday in January, 1844, remaining, however, but two years, his resignation being accepted Nov. 24, 1845. Mr. Dunbar was a Scotchman, an interesting and forceful preacher, and was very much respected and beloved. During his ministry there arose a serious dissension in the church in connection with the question of the discipline of members belonging to secret societies; but the trouble was not in any way attributable to him, and subsequently the church cheerfully recorded their esteem of him "as one of the most prudent and godly men whose labors the church has enjoyed." He returned to his former church in New York, and lived a life singularly blessed in his Christian ministry. He died July 24, 1864, at the age of seventy-three.

Rev. GEORGE W. BOSWORTH accepted the call of the church in February, and commenced his pastorate March 29, 1846. He was then twenty-eight years of age, and had had but one previous settlement. He was a man of attractive appearance, quiet manner, and an excellent preacher. His power was soon felt for good, and his devotion to the spiritual interests of the church resulted in large accessions. General harmony prevailed, and the church took a stronger position in the denomination than ever before. The Sabbath school was maintained with uninterrupted prosperity, and the prayer-meetings became of special power. During this pastorate the vestry was enlarged by removal of one of the stores which had formerly occupied space in the basement, the house was decorated, a new

organ purchased, and a portion of the mortgage debt cancelled. After a service of nearly nine years Mr. Bosworth resigned in January, 1855, to accept a call to Portland, Maine. His long pastorates here and elsewhere and his standing in the denomination attest to the strength of his character and the value of his life. He died at Wakefield, January 19, 1888, aged seventy.

In 1853 some of the members became interested in a project for establishing a Sabbath school and maintaining preaching services at City Point. The plan met with much encouragement; and the church appointed a committee to consider the subject, which action resulted in the collection of \$2,000 for the erection of a chapel in 1854 and four years later the formation of the Fourth Street Baptist Church.

Rev. JOSEPH A. GOODHUE, the next pastor, commenced his pastorate in October, and was installed Nov. 22, 1855, resigning, however, on the 7th of June, 1857. Mr. Goodhue was a scholarly man, a good writer, an excellent pastor, and a persistent worker for the conversion of souls and the advancement of the church in Christian graces. A revival of power followed his ministrations. He was universally esteemed in the denomination. His death occurred at Hyde Park, Dec. 1, 1873, at the age of forty-five.

Rev. JOHN DUNCAN succeeded to the pastorate Jan. 1, 1858. About the time of his settlement there was a great interest manifested in religious matters throughout the country, and this church shared in its blessings. Great additions to the membership re-

sulted, and all the interests of the church advanced. Mr. Duncan was a good preacher and pastor, and his five years of service were fruitful. He closed his pastorate June, 1863, and entered other fields of labor. His death occurred July 28, 1886, at the age of seventy-two. In April, 1858, nineteen members were dismissed for the purpose of forming the Fourth Street Baptist Church. It is not out of place to state that during this period the ordinance of baptism was for the first time in this church administered in the evening.

The need of a new meeting-house commensurate with the demands of the day and in a new location, to accommodate the movement of the Protestant portion of the population, was very strongly felt at this period. At one time it was practically decided to arise and build; but the financial problems appeared difficult to solve, and some members had serious doubts as to whether the time was ripe for the move. The result was a decision to make extensive repairs on the old house, a decision which, in the light of subsequent events, especially the rapid desertion of the locality by the church-going people, was, perhaps, unfortunate.

At an expense of over three thousand dollars the whole front of the building was changed, the entrance was much improved, the vestry-room enlarged and made attractive, and new furniture provided. All the stores were done away with, gas was introduced, and various other improvements made, thus giving to the church, in some respects, a modern building.

Rev. GRANVILLE S. ABBOTT, a graduate of Newton

Theological Institution, was next called to the church ; and he was ordained and installed Sept. 4, 1863.

With the vigor of youth and the inspiration of his first settlement, he labored for the advancement of the cause ; and, considering the difficulties attending the work of the church, he attained good success. Harmony prevailed, and during his ministry large numbers were received as members. Through Mr. Abbott's exertions a balance remaining due on an old mortgage of more than thirty years' standing was removed, and for three or four years the church enjoyed the novelty of having no interest charges to meet.

But, notwithstanding the extensive repairs made in 1858, the project of a new meeting-house was many times renewed, until, finally, in 1866, it was decided to sell the old building and erect a new one. A lot of land on the south-east corner of Broadway and F Street, which had been wisely secured by Mr. N. P. Mann, Jr., was purchased, and contracts made for the erection of a fine building. Efforts to secure contributions to meet the proposed heavy expenditures were put in operation, with fair results. The old house with the land was sold, Nov. 15, 1866, for \$13,500 ; but by arrangement the main audience-room was reserved for services until Sept. 10, 1867, when it was vacated, and then until the following March the Sabbath school and the church services were held elsewhere, principally in Lyceum Hall. With all these unfavorable circumstances, the church kept well together, looking forward with great expectations to the completion of the new house.

The new building was about 100 feet on F Street by 61 feet on Broadway. It was of the Romanesque order of architecture, of brick with Nova Scotia free-stone trimmings, slated roof, and a spire 160 feet high.



The Third Meeting-house.

South-east Corner of Broadway and F Street.

The whole cost was \$50,000 to \$60,000, and it was one of the finest buildings in the place.

The main audience-room with the galleries on the sides and northerly end contained 168 pews, accommodating nine hundred to one thousand persons. The

pews were of chestnut with black walnut trimmings; and the cushions, carpets, and furnishings were all in keeping. An organ, costing some \$2,500, was placed at the southerly end of the audience-room, the choir seats adjoining. Stained-glass windows and interior decorations rendered it a very attractive house.

The failure of the contractor very much delayed the work; and the church was greatly indebted to the Building Committee, and especially to Mr. Gilbert Wait, upon whom fell the heavy burden of superintending the completion of the house.

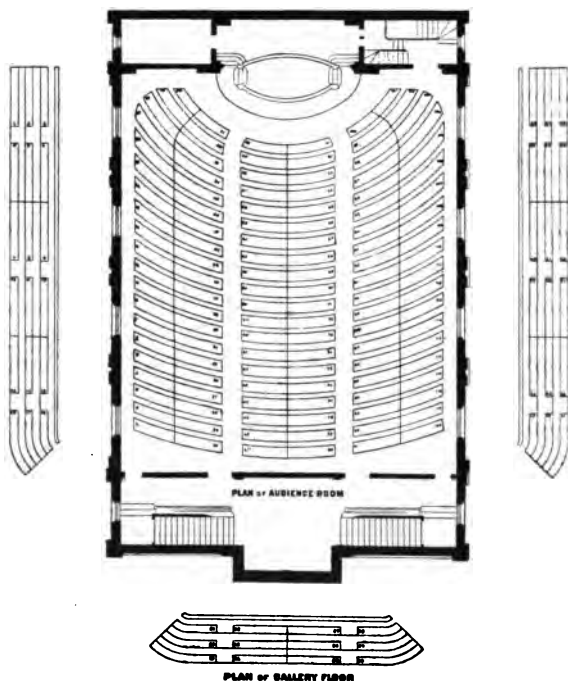
The corner-stone was laid with appropriate services July 31, 1867, a box containing a large number of pamphlets and manuscripts being placed therein. On the 4th of March, 1868, the vestry was occupied for the first time. The house was dedicated upon its completion, Nov. 5, 1868; and the congregation entered it with feelings of gratitude after its long season of disbarment from the full privileges of a church home.

Mr. Abbott entered heartily into the plan of securing this new house of worship, and labored for the best interests of the church during the trying transition days when it was without a place of meeting.

He closed his pastorate Nov. 1, 1869, accepting a call to Watertown, but subsequently removed to California, where he became prominently identified with the denominational interests in that State. He was called home Nov. 22, 1897, in the sixtieth year of his age.

Rev. JAMES S. DICKERSON, D.D., was Mr. Abbott's successor in May, 1870, being installed on the 5th of

June following. He came to a united church, and at once endeared himself to the people by the sweetness of his disposition and the fervor of his preaching. Success attended his ministry, increasing congrega-



Plan of Audience-room, 1868.

tions and large additions bearing testimony to his faithful labors. His activity and usefulness were, however, interrupted by sickness, which led to his resigna-

tion Jan. 31, 1875. During this pastorate a large amount of money was raised for current expenses, cancellation of indebtedness, and for benevolence; and it is probably a fact that the church at this period attained its greatest financial ability, although not able to free itself entirely from debt.

In 1870 preaching services on Sabbath evenings were instituted instead of the prayer-meeting which had been the uniform custom from the organization of the church.

Dr. Dickerson died at Chicago, March 21, 1876, aged fifty-one. Of him some one has written, "He was the freest, bravest, brotherliest soul ours ever came in contact with."

Rev. HENRY A. CORDO, D.D., commenced his labors as pastor Sept. 1, 1875. Although the church had been for seven months without a leader, it had maintained its religious work, and was in good spiritual condition.

The following items from the records of the year 1876 will indicate in a measure the activity of the church and the demands upon the energies of the pastor and the leading members.

The clerk's report for that year shows that the meeting-house was open 291 days in the year. In addition to the preaching services, which were held every Sabbath, there were 1 temperance meeting, 1 memorial service, 1 funeral service, 52 choir and Sabbath-school rehearsals, 6 Sabbath-school concerts, 2 Sabbath-school union meetings, 28 socials, festivals, etc., 2 *special* church business meetings, 15 Prudential Com-





South Baptist Church, Broadway and F Streets. Interior.

mittee meetings, 17 teachers' meetings, 132 prayer-meetings (including 46 young people's).

In addition to this were numerous meetings of the Corporation, Standing Committee, and various sub-committees.

This record is not given as one of exceptional worth, but is the only one accessible. Doubtless, some other years would show equal activity.

Dr. Cordo was an able preacher, and some success attended his ministry. He, however, resigned after a short term, June 29, 1878, since which time he has been doing good service in New York State and elsewhere.

The successor of Dr. Cordo was Rev. JOHN H. BARROWS, who was installed Nov. 12, 1878. At this time the church was heavily embarrassed by debt, and was not in a condition to give its pastor the help he should have received. Mr. Barrows was painstaking and conscientious in his work, but circumstances were not favorable to large gatherings or apparent success, and he tendered his resignation Oct. 26, 1879, since which time he has been settled as pastor in Maine.

Rev. THOMAS D. ANDERSON, D.D., was the next pastor, commencing April 4, 1880, and remaining until his death, which occurred Dec. 19, 1883, at the age of sixty-four and one-half years. "His commanding presence, his vigorous intellect, his genial spirit, his unswerving loyalty to truth, his unselfish and untiring devotion to his work, made him an honored and conspicuous figure in the denomination." Dr. Anderson did an excellent work in building up the church in

spiritual things, in bringing peace upon troubled waters, and in leading souls to Christ.

Rev. DAVID B. JUTTEN succeeded to the pastorate Feb. 10, 1884. Mr. Jutten was an attractive preacher and an earnest worker, and the church rallied with energy and enthusiasm to his support. The pastoral work in the homes of the people was continuous and delightful. Large congregations were gathered; and there were constant accessions, and general prosperity ensued. During this period, however, the church suffered the loss of many strong members by death and removal from South Boston. Yet, notwithstanding its weakened condition from this cause, by persistent efforts the financial burdens were met each year.

Mr. Jutten's pastorate (the longest of any of our pastors) closed April 15, 1893, he accepting a call to Fall River, where he is still carrying on a successful work.

Rev. ALBERT T. SOWERBY, Ph.D., commenced his labors as pastor Sept. 1, 1894. Mr. Sowerby was a man of great energy, a forcible and sound preacher of the gospel. Large audiences attended his ministrations, and a very large number were received by baptism. But during all of his service he was contending against the tide. By frequent removals the church was weakened; and, although its nominal membership was large, the really active membership remaining was small, while the financial burdens were great. After more than four years of untiring effort Mr. Sowerby resigned, Dec. 31, 1898, accepting the presidency of the Roger Williams University, Nashville, Tenn.

And now again the solution of the problem relating to the maintenance of the church in its present location demanded solution.

It had a large and attractive house of worship, a nominally large membership, with a goodly number of earnest and consecrated men and women. But against this were serious opposing conditions. Its property was subject to a mortgage of \$12,000, the condition of the house would soon require the expenditure of a large sum for repairs, and the expenses of maintaining services were great. A large proportion of the members were non-residents or not active in the work; and of those who were closely identified with its interests, but few were able to afford much financial assistance.

For more than twenty years there had been a large excess of expenditures over receipts, and it had become more and more difficult to meet the deficit each year. It was evident to the brethren that, while these demands might possibly be met for a year or two, yet little encouragement appeared for the future, as the additions to the church brought but little, if any, material strength.

While these complicated questions were being considered by the Standing Committee of the church, a proposition was received from the Fourth Street Baptist Church, looking toward a union of the two bodies.

This church had also suffered by loss of members and in financial strength, and found it difficult to accomplish its accustomed work. The whole subject substantially was narrowed down to the question of

attempting to support two churches burdened with debt, with no prospect of improvement in their condition, or to merge the two into one, and, free from debt, commence a new career.

Two phases of the discussion tended strongly to influence the South Church to a conclusion : *first*, that a large proportion of its resident membership, some 80 to 90 per cent., lived east of Dorchester Street ; and, *second*, that the plan provided for a *removal*, and *not a surrender*.

The proposition in detail was as follows: The Fourth Street Church to relinquish its name, organization, and its property, its members to unite with and its property to be conveyed to the South Church. On the other part, the South Church was to sell its property, pay off the mortgages on both estates, amounting to \$20,000, and, after making some improvements, occupy the house of the Fourth Street Church on Fourth, corner of L Street.

After many conferences, serious consideration and prayer, the plan here outlined was agreed upon, and the necessary votes passed by both churches and both corporations.

On the 1st of March, 1899, the Fourth Street Church voted to discontinue its organization ; and its members, one hundred and ninety-eight in number, were received into the South Church.

The South Church property was sold ; and both mortgages, which had been such a burden for years and a hindrance to advancement, were discharged. The last service was held in the F Street building on the

9th of July, the congregation leaving with sincere regret the place hallowed by many precious memories of worship and Christian activity.

On account of extensive repairs and changes the other meeting-house was not ready for immediate use, but the courtesy of the Universalist Church in offering the use of their house of worship until August 30 prevented an interruption of services. The audience-room was opened for public services on Sunday, September 3.

Rev. FREDERICK M. GARDNER, who had supplied the pulpit for three months, accepted a call to the pastorate, commencing his duties as pastor May 7, 1899, since which time he has entered with zeal into the work of the church and the plans for removal. He has had the pleasure of leading the people into their new field of labor, and all are looking forward to the accomplishment of a good work for the church and for Him whose we are and whom we serve.

## THE MEMBERSHIP.

As this historical sketch of the church is being prepared, there comes the remembrance of many individuals who in its early days were closely identified with its interests. Without their familiar names the record seems sadly deficient. Mention has already been made of Jacob Flinn and Samuel Hill as connected with the beginning of the work. Then one recalls Timothy Rich, A. P. Penniman, Solon Jenkins, Nehemiah P. Mann, George B. Dexter, Thomas Nickerson among the leaders of the church before 1840, and some of them for many years afterward. Later there came into the work other good men, such as Henry Safford, Ambrose Lovis, John P. Robinson, Nelson H. Tilden, Gilbert Wait, John D. Richardson, James G. Lovell, William A. Orcutt, Daniel M. Mayhew, with the younger men growing into stalwart Christian workers, George S. Dexter, Charles W. Dexter, Nehemiah P. Mann, Jr., Gustavus Forbes, Isaac H. Robbins, William C. Culver, Edward L. Goodwin, and doubtless many others.

And no one long connected with the church can ever forget the name or the personality of Brother John Larrabee, who for very many years served as "door-keeper in the house of the Lord."

Of these, seven only were members with us at the time of the removal to F Street; but others stepped into the places made vacant by death and removal. There were Ubert L. Pettingill, Irah D. Spaulding,

Henry McCoy, Robert Provan, Barnabas F. Dunbar, Gustavus Mayo, Ethan R. Cheney, and a host of others whose willing hands and hearts were given to the material and spiritual interests of the church.

Of those who during the last twenty-five years have borne the burdens let the future historian speak.

However strong the desire, one scarcely dares to make these brief and imperfect statements, because some names which deserve honorable mention will be unwittingly omitted.

How many there have been who never held prominent places in the church and whose financial abilities, perhaps, were limited, and yet in their way have contributed as much to the success of the work as others whose names appear more frequently upon the records. The influence and work of the consecrated men and women of the church is a part of that unwritten history which can never be fully told. The church has been favored all through the years of its life with such members, who have borne the burdens and wisely directed affairs, and the fruit of their sacrifices and labors remain.

The church has also been blessed in giving some of its members to the great work of preaching the gospel.

Rev. Francis A. Douglass, for many years a missionary in India, was ordained in 1854 by this church; and in 1861 Miss Sarah H. Marston was sent as a missionary to Burmah by the Woman's Union Missionary Society of America, being the first woman sent by the Christian women of America for work in foreign lands.



Rev. Messrs. Samuel Hill, Jr., Henry G. Safford, Frederic D. Blake, George W. Clow, Nathan F. Tilden, Albert D. Spaulding, and Charles H. Upton were members with us before they entered the ministry.

Some of these have ceased from their labors. The others are still at work in the vineyard of their Master, whom they learned to love and serve among us in former days.

## THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

No history of a church can be in any respect complete without reference to the Sabbath school. In this case, as in many others, the organization of the school preceded that of the church. The exact date is not known, but it was in the spring of the year 1827; and certainly at the date of the first service in the chapel, July 8, 1827, an organization had been effected and plans made for aggressive work.

At this time Sunday schools were comparatively in their infancy, the first one in Massachusetts having been formed in 1816, only about ten years previous to ours. Hence, for some time, all that was done was practically in the nature of experiment. The services were held in the main room of the chapel until the basement was fitted up, a room about 15 x 30 feet being prepared especially for the purpose. The attendance at first was twenty-five to thirty scholars, with six or eight teachers. Great credit is due to the women of the church, who in those early days contributed as much to the success of the school as the men, and probably more. As there was but one other Sabbath school in South Boston, the field to draw from was very large, extending from the bridge to the "point"; and the ladies canvassed for scholars with commendable ardor and with successful results. In 1829 there were ninety-five scholars, and in 1834 the number had increased to two hundred and twenty-four.

Deacon Flinn, the founder of the church, was selected as the first superintendent of the school, to be followed in subsequent years by others, twenty-three in all, equally earnest and faithful.

A manuscript history of the school, prepared for its fiftieth anniversary by the writer of this sketch, contains many items relating to its formation, its officers, its membership, and the methods of study and of management. Brought down to the present day, as might readily be done, it would doubtless be of historic interest to those now connected with the school, and also to many who will be identified with the work in the future.

In the more than seventy years of its existence it has had a varied history, but has always been a useful and efficient adjunct to the church. A large proportion of the accessions to the church by baptism have been from the school and its teachers and officers have always been closely identified with the work of the church. The membership has at times reached five hundred, but the total number of names enrolled cannot be ascertained.

Thousands of children and young people have passed through the school, many of whom through its influence have been led to better lives and to the service of Christ.

In a new location, September, 1899, the school enters upon a new era in its history, one full of possibilities for greater usefulness.

## FINANCES.

In the early years of this undertaking the finances became a prominent factor in the work, and magnified the ordinary difficulties attending the maintenance of new churches. The membership was composed of men of but little financial means, many of them young, just starting out in business life; and, when the land was purchased for a meeting-house, they were obliged to mortgage it for one-half the value (\$1,400). And after the erection of the house, money enough to pay for it not being obtained, an additional mortgage was placed upon the property, making the total about \$4,500. A portion of this debt was paid off within a few years, yet the society was not absolutely free from indebtedness until about 1863.

In 1854 the historian of the church wrote: "This church has passed through great changes and painful vicissitudes. At the commencement of its career as a church its external condition was greatly above its real strength. . . . Its meeting-house was burdened and involved in heavy debt, and the disparity between appearance and strength was soon manifest."

This unfortunate action of the church at its beginning was repeated at the time of removal in 1866-67, and the building of a new house, only to bring a greater burden to the church than in the first instance. It was confidently expected that the favorable location secured, the large and attractive house and the increased facilities for carrying on the work would soon

develop new sources of income, sufficient not only to meet the current expenses, but within a few years to cancel the mortgage indebtedness.

These hopes, however well founded, were not realized.

At the time of building the price of all materials was at high-water mark ; and, although the contributions of the church and congregation were made in a generous manner (some \$55,000 being raised within a few years), yet it seemed impossible to collect enough to pay the whole debt and meet the current expenses also.

In looking back upon the experiences of that period, it seems to the onlooker as if the problem might have been solved by reduction of expenses and a determination to lay by each year something for the debt ; yet those who have had the management of church finances know how difficult, if not impossible, it is to accomplish this with the income problematical and the outgo practically fixed. The yearly expenditures of the church have varied from, say, \$1,200, when the minister's salary was \$800, to \$6,000, when \$3,500 was paid to the minister.

For the last twenty years the members have contributed nobly to pay the deficit of each year, a sum varying from \$800 to \$1,600, leaving the mortgage untouched.

If there is one lesson above all others to be learned from perusal of the financial records, it is one of warning against allowing an interest account to appear on the treasurer's books.

But the financial operations of this church probably differ little from the majority of churches; they are, however, suggestive of the difficulties attending the maintenance of a city church,—difficulties of which the average member knows but little.

The total amount of money raised by the church since its organization to January, 1899, for all purposes, is estimated at \$325,000 to \$350,000.

### STATISTICS.

Original members . . . . .	19	
Accessions. Baptism . . . . .	1,128	
Letter . . . . .	946*	
Experience . . . . .	77	
Restoration . . . . .	25	2,195
Losses. Dismission . . . . .	795	
Death . . . . .	289	
Exclusion . . . . .	184	
Erasure . . . . .	267	1,535
Membership Sept. 1, 1899 . . . . .		660
Average membership for last twenty years . . .		385

\* This includes 198 from the Fourth Street Church.

## PASTORS.

Rev. THOMAS DRIVER . . .	Apr. 16, 1829 — Apr. 1, 1830
Rev. ROLLIN H. NEALE . .	Sept. 15, 1833 — Mar. 19, 1834
Rev. TIMOTHY R. CRESSEY .	May 25, 1834 — June 22, 1835
Rev. THOMAS DRIVER . . .	Dec., 1838 — Apr. 12, 1843
Rev. DUNCAN DUNBAR . . .	Nov., 1843 — Nov. 24, 1845
Rev. GEO. W. BOSWORTH . .	Mar. 29, 1846 — Jan. 29, 1855
Rev. JOSEPH A. GOODHUE . .	Nov. 22, 1855 — June 27, 1857
Rev. JOHN DUNCAN . . . .	Jan. 1, 1858 — June 1, 1863
Rev. GRANVILLE S. ABBOTT .	Sept. 4, 1863 — Nov. 1, 1869
Rev. JAMES S. DICKERSON . .	June 5, 1873 — Jan. 31, 1875
Rev. HENRY A. CORDO . . .	Sept. 5, 1875 — June 29, 1878
Rev. JOHN H. BARROWS . . .	Nov. 12, 1878 — Oct. 26, 1879
Rev. THOMAS D. ANDERSON . .	Apr. 4, 1880 — Dec. 19, 1883
Rev. DAVID B. JUTTEN . . .	Feb. 10, 1884 — Apr. 15, 1893
Rev. ALBERT T. SOWERBY . .	Sept. 1, 1894 — Dec. 31, 1898
Rev. FREDERICK M. GARDNER	May 7, 1899 —

## DEACONS.

JACOB FLINN . . . . .	Sept. 9, 1828 — June 4, 1837
SAMUEL HILL . . . . .	Mar. 3, 1829 — Nov. 20, 1839
SOLON JENKINS . . . . .	Jan. 17, 1838 — Dec. 11, 1844
A. P. PENNIMAN . . . . .	Jan. 15, 1840 — Feb. 15, 1849
TIMOTHY RICH . . . . .	Feb. 18, 1842 — June 16, 1847
HENRY SAFFORD . . . . .	Feb. 18, 1842 — June 10, 1856
GEO. B. DEXTER . . . . .	Jan. 15, 1847 — Jan. 14, 1864*
THOMAS NICKERSON . . . . .	Jan. 12, 1848 — Nov. 4, 1859
NEHEMIAH P. MANN . . . . .	Mar. 15, 1849 — Sept. 16, 1869
HENRY SAFFORD . . . . .	Dec. 16, 1859 — July 27, 1871*
DANIEL M. MAYHEW . . . . .	Dec. 16, 1859 — Dec. 5, 1873
JAMES G. LOVELL . . . . .	Jan. 13, 1865 — Mar. 29, 1878*
HENRY MCCOY . . . . .	July 18, 1873 — Feb. 9, 1883
UBERT L. PETTINGILL . . . . .	July 18, 1873 — Jan. 17, 1879
GUSTAVUS MAYO . . . . .	Jan. 16, 1874 — Jan. 17, 1879
ALLEN MCLEOD . . . . .	Jan. 17, 1879 — Aug. 23, 1893
CHARLES T. ELLIS . . . . .	Jan. 17, 1879 — Jan. 17, 1880
FRANK A. LOCKE . . . . .	Jan. 17, 1879 — Jan. 17, 1880
CHARLES H. DOW . . . . .	Apr. 15, 1881 — Oct. 7, 1890*
GEO. O. LANPHEAR . . . . .	Apr. 15, 1881 — Jan. 29, 1889
HADLEY P. HANSON . . . . .	Feb. 9, 1883 — Jan. 29, 1892
BARNABAS F. DUNBAR . . . . .	Jan. 21, 1885
BENJ. F. DROWN . . . . .	Jan. 21, 1885 — Nov. 25, 1898
LEANDER K. MARSTON . . . . .	Jan. 29, 1892
WM. G. WEBSTER . . . . .	Jan. 27, 1893 — Feb. 8, 1895
ARCHIBALD T. DAVISON . . . . .	Jan. 27, 1893 — Dec. 9, 1898
JAMES M. LIBBY . . . . .	Feb. 18, 1897
ALFRED J. GIBERSON . . . . .	Feb. 18, 1897 — Jan. 28, 1898
ALBERT TUTTLE . . . . .	May 26, 1899
TIMOTHY WHEATER . . . . .	May 26, 1899
JOHN HOOD . . . . .	May 26, 1899

\* Died in office.



#### FOURTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

The advisability of establishing religious services in that section of South Boston called City Point, "to meet the spiritual needs of the residents there," was the subject of much consideration by a few members of the South Baptist Church and others in 1852-53. Many conferences upon the subject were held, Deacon Samuel Hill,\* Ambrose Lovis, John P. Robinson, Deacon George B. Dexter, Mrs. Romanus Emerson, and perhaps a few others, participating. These deliberations resulted in having the subject presented to the church by Deacon Dexter on the 18th of March, 1853, when a committee was appointed to carefully consider plans for accomplishing the purpose. They reported in August, recommending leasing a lot of land and erecting thereon a small chapel, adding in a subsequent report that they met with "more and more encouragement to prosecute the undertaking, the farther they advanced in it," and that a building should immediately be erected. For some months no progress appears to have been made, except in the matter of securing pledges of money for the object. But by June, 1854, some \$2,000 had been promised; and a lot of land on Fourth Street, corner of

\* Due credit has never been given to Deacon Hill for his interest in the establishment of Tremont Temple in 1840-42. He was in close connection with Deacon Gilbert in that enterprise, and, indeed, was courageous when others were despondent; and it was largely due to his hopefulness and self-sacrifice that the project was successful.

He is remembered as an earnest Christian worker, a man of great kindness of heart, and active in all benevolent and religious enterprises.

L (measuring 100 feet by 125 feet), was secured at a nominal rental. The land was subsequently purchased by Mr. Ambrose Lovis for \$1,000, and later conveyed to the church. A large committee was appointed to



Chapel, 1854.  
Fourth and L Streets.

attend to the erection of a chapel and to have charge of the new interest, with the understanding that, in the event of a church, being formed, the property should be conveyed to it.

The chapel was erected without delay. It was a building 52 x 32, placed in the centre of the lot referred

to, the accompanying view giving a good idea of the external appearance of the structure.

All that was really necessary to aid in carrying on the work in this building — settees, bibles, hymn-books, etc.— was furnished by various individuals.

Thus equipped, the chapel was opened and dedicated on the 6th of August, 1854; and on the following Sabbath a Sunday-school, consisting of thirty-one scholars and teachers, was formed.

Preaching services were held with few interruptions until the fall of 1856. Mr. Joseph C. Wightman, afterward a successful preacher in the State, and Mr. Amasa Howard, each labored for several months in the field. There was, however, difficulty in raising funds sufficient to maintain regular services, and for a time preaching was discontinued. Naturally, the Sabbath school for this cause declined in numbers and interest.

In 1857 a new committee took matters in charge, and services were renewed, Rev. Samuel Davies from Philadelphia being engaged as pastor for twelve months, from the 1st of January, 1858. New interest was quickly awakened, the school doubled in number, and the record states that "the blessings and zeal of the friends have gone beyond the expectations cherished."

The success of the movement appearing assured, measures were taken to form a church.

On the 21st of April, 1858, in accordance with the decision of a council of churches, the **FOURTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH** was appropriately recognized as a duly constituted Baptist church. Of the twenty-five

original members, sixteen were from the South Church. Among this number, Samuel Hill, Ambrose Lovis, Henry A. Kent, Charles W. Dexter, John W. Crafts, Alexander H. Lewis, Samuel Hill, Jr., and Mrs. Romanus Emerson were prominently identified with the new interest, contributing of their time and means to promote its welfare. Others then and subsequently connected with the church, both men and women, were zealous in the work.

In September, 1858, the number of members was forty, ten having been baptized since April previous. Mr. Davies closed his labors Dec. 30, 1859.

The pastors of the church since its organization have been as follows:—

Rev. SAMUEL DAVIES . . .	Jan. 1, 1858—Dec. 30, 1859
Rev. AUSTIN H. STOWELL . .	Nov. 3, 1860—Apr. 24, 1862
Rev. EDWIN A. LECOMPTE . .	July 20, 1862—Dec. 31, 1868
Rev. EVAN LEWIS . . . . .	Sept. 19, 1869—Sept. 1, 1871
Rev. ANDREW POLLARD, . .	Jan. 1, 1872—June 19, 1874
Rev. LAMBERT L. WOOD . .	Dec. 16, 1874—June, 1879
Rev. CHARLES H. SPALDING .	Apr., 1880—Oct. 31, 1889
Rev. CHARLES L. RHOADES .	Jan. 1, 1888—Nov. 30, 1889
Rev. EDWIN S. WHEELER . .	Dec. 1, 1890—June 1, 1895
Rev. OSCAR A. HILLARD . .	Oct. 6, 1895—June 3, 1898

Rev. A. P. Mason was acting pastor for some months after June, 1879.

Mr. Lecompte was an excellent pastor and preacher, earnest and consecrated. During his pastorate there were large additions to the membership, and the church

made a very marked gain in material and spiritual strength. The chapel did not afford sufficient accommodations for the increasing congregations, and it was decided to build a new house. This was erected at a cost of about \$20,000 in 1864, and dedicated Feb. 2, 1865. The building, with a seating capacity of about



Second Meeting-house, Fourth and L Streets.  
1865.

six hundred, was very neatly furnished, and in every way made an attractive church home. In 1891 some changes were made in the interior, the organ being moved from the south to the north end; but otherwise the building remained in its original shape until transferred to the South Church.

Dr. Pollard was a sound preacher and a judicious pastor, having the qualities especially needed at the

time of his settlement, harmonizing conflicting elements and strengthening the church.

During Mr. Wood's stay a goodly number were added to the church. He was considered a good preacher, was a man of pronounced opinions, and his voice was often heard in discussion of questions of moral reform and kindred subjects.

Dr. Spalding's labors for more than six years were blessed in the conversion of souls and the uplifting of the church, and it attained a position in numbers and influence greater than at any other period in its history. Both the church and the community appreciated him as an able preacher and a genial and devoted pastor.

Mr. Rhoades's pastorate was especially calculated to stimulate the social and religious life of the young people of the church; and, although his term of service was short, it was not without good results.

Mr. Wheeler's service of five years with the church was delightful and helpful, and through his earnest labors much was accomplished. He not only preached the gospel in its fulness, but took a prominent position in matters of general public interest. Endearing himself to his people, he was ever and still is welcomed to their homes.

The Sabbath school has had a very successful career. In numbers and enthusiasm its rank has always been high (its membership at some periods reaching five hundred), and some of the best work of the church has been in this department.

This church, as is the case of the South Church, had

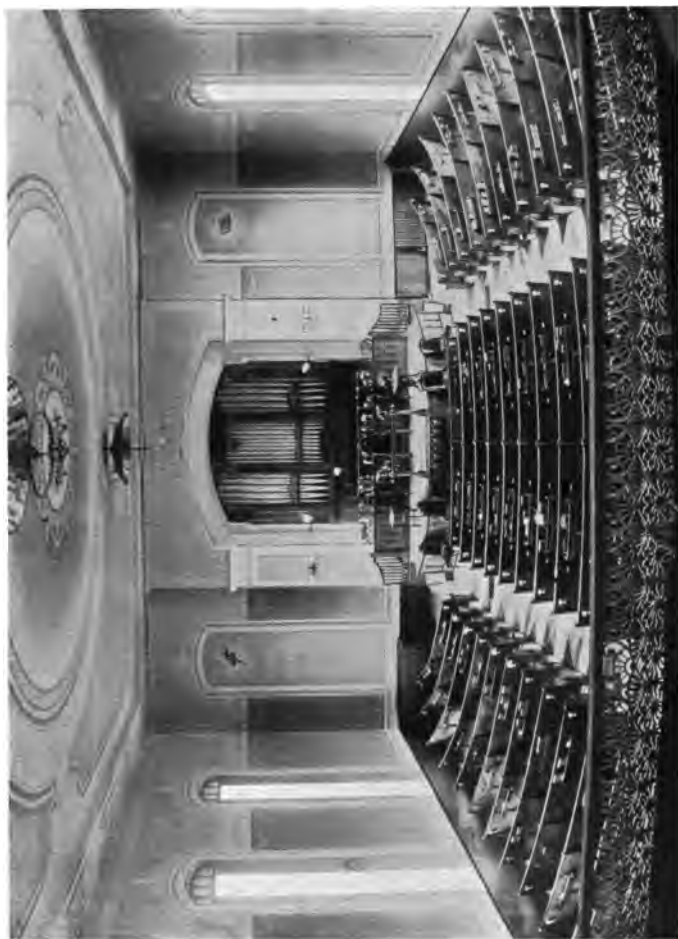
suffered for years by the removal of members and the lack of sufficient means to carry on the work as it should be ; and the members were often discouraged and disheartened.

Finally, the question of union with the mother church assumed definite form, and, as stated elsewhere, the union was consummated on the 1st of March, 1899, by one hundred and ninety-eight members joining the South Church ; and the separate history of the Fourth Street Church was closed.

Having fulfilled its mission as a distinct church, the work is now to be carried on under a different name, but with the same end in view, the glory of God.

### STATISTICS.

Original members . . . . .	25	
Accessions. Baptism . . . . .	403	
Letter . . . . .	334	
Experience . . . . .	36	
Restoration . . . . .	7	805
Losses. Dismission . . . . .	317	
Death . . . . .	76	
Exclusion . . . . .	14	
Erasures . . . . .	200	607
Membership February, 1899 . . . . .		198
Largest membership September, 1885 . . . . .	312	
Average for last twenty years . . . . .	265	



South Baptist Church, Fourth and L Streets. Interior.



## THE NEW MEETING-HOUSE OF THE CONSOLIDATED CHURCHES, 1899.

This house was erected for the Fourth Street Baptist Church in 1864, and dedicated on the 2d of February, 1865.



Corner of Gallery.

When the two churches were consolidated, it was deemed necessary to make radical changes and extensive repairs in the building, to give needed accommodations.

A tower was erected, in which was placed the bell

of the F Street Church. The main audience-room was enlarged by addition of a gallery at the southerly end, and the entrance to the building and the vestry very much improved. The vestry was also enlarged, and important changes made in the various committee-rooms, affording greater facilities for the work of the Sabbath school and the customary meetings of the church.

With new arrangements for heating and lighting, the walls newly and beautifully decorated, and other improvements, the house was made very attractive, and the better fitted for the Master's use.

On the 5th of October the pastor, Rev. F. M. Gardner, preached the dedicatory sermon from the text, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord"; and on several subsequent days special services, religious and social, were held, closing on the 13th of October with a roll-call and consecration meeting.











3



